

Museum and Cultural Advisory Board - One East Main Street, third floor, south Studios conference room, on February 10, 2010

Members Present:

Peter G. Cook Vincent DiBella
Douglas Brimhall Kit Filbey
Amanda Buscas Rebecca Nolan

Members Absent:

Dr. Kent Layton
Lars Nielson, Jr.
Dr. Robbi Venditti

Staff Present:

Kari Kent Rob Schultz
Tom Wilson Randy Vogel
Nancy Wolter Jean Kaminski

Douglas Brimhall, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Douglas Brimhall, Chair, called for any corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes of January 13. There being none, Peter Cook made a motion, Kit Filbey seconded, and the Board members present unanimously approved the minutes of January 13. They will be posted on the City's Webpage.

Public Comments:

There was no public present.

Present Information – Overview of Mesa Historical Museum – Rob Schultz

Kari Kent, Deputy City Manager and Acting Arts and Cultural Director, reported that the City has been working on a partnership with the Mesa Historical Museum (MHM). Ms. Kent met with the Mesa Historical Museum Society's (501(c) (3) organization) President, Vic Linoff, and right now, the Museum is focusing on 2010. The Society is looking at reduced hours for the Museum in 2010. The Mesa Historical Society (MNH) continues to fund raise for program development for the Museum in hopes that they can offer more hours in the future. In the meantime, the City has hired their Executive Director, Lisa Anderson, to be part of the Arts and Cultural Department. Her role for the City will be to serve as project manager for "Play Ball" exhibit that will move to the Arizona Museum for Youth (AMY) on February 25. In addition, her responsibilities include taking some of Museum's heritage resources and incorporating them into the City's institutions, i.e., Arizona Museum of Natural History (AZMNH), AMY, Mesa Arts Center (MAC), Libraries, etc. Ms. Anderson will also assist at the MHM in the deaccessioning of inventory. Potentially, "Play Ball" could stay at AMY for three years, but ideally, MHM would like to find a permanent location for the Cactus League exhibit, which continues to grow each year in acquiring new donations toward the exhibit. Invitations will be going out soon for a VIP reception that will take place on February 25, 5:30 – 8:00 p.m. The reception will include Governor Janet Brewer, ex-governor Rose Mofford, who was instrumental in saving the Cactus League in the '80's, as well as State and City leadership, owners, Baseball President, and players of the Cactus League. The exhibit will open to the public on Friday, February 26, with a member's reception that evening. The exhibit will be at AMY through November 7.

Another project, in conjunction with the MHM, being looked at is the Federal Building. Mesa acquired the Federal Building years ago from the Department of the Interior. The intent for the building was to use it as a complement to the current Museums. Mentioned in the application when it was submitted, was the City's long term use of the facility that would incorporate a partnership with AZMNH, AMY, MHM, and the Library in conjunction with the Mesa Room. There are no funds to prepare the Federal Building at this time, which offers the opportunity for the City to go deeper into what the potential uses might be. The City plans to gather the stakeholders along with the Engineering Department to look at potential uses – exhibit space, storage space, preparation space, etc., get an estimate of the cost to rehabilitate the Building, and then work with an architect in creating a design plan. One of Council's Strategic Initiatives is to plan for the continuation of arts and culture. Council's goal is to make arts and culture an important part of the downtown community. For Council to achieve their goal, the City needs to start planning for the utilization of the Federal Building. Douglas Brimhall, Chair, asked if the asbestos has been abated in the Building. Dr. Tom Wilson responded that it had, and he also acknowledged Board member Vince DiBella as the architect of the 2005 study that was done on the building.

After meeting with the stakeholders, staff will come back to the Board with some of the ideas for the Federal Building's use. Finally, it would go to Council with a recommendation for its use. The challenging questions will be how we will pay for the rehabilitation and operation of the building.

Advertisement for the opening of the "Play Ball" exhibit will be published in programs throughout the Cactus League. Hopefully, it will inspire people to come visit Mesa, and AMY will be able to acquire new memberships from patrons coming from all parts the Valley.

Discuss and Provide Direction – Review Duties and Responsibilities of the Board; Discuss Who We Are as a Group; Discuss What We Can Do as a Group Regarding Grants; Assign a Board Member to Invite Affiliates – Douglas Brimhall

A copy of the Duties and Responsibilities of the Museum and Cultural Advisory Board were included in this month's Board packet. Douglas Brimhall, Chair, read the four bullet points from the Duties.

- Advise City Council on policies relating to arts and cultural facilities and services
- Advise City Council on policies relating to Public Art
- Attend programs and events of the Arts and Cultural Department and of the greater arts and cultural community
- Advocate as individuals, as appropriate, on behalf of arts and culture

The first two bullets leave little for the Board to do at this time. The last two bullets are areas where the Board could be more active.

After discussion, it was decided that the Board would continue advocating keeping grants on the City's budget as a line item. Last year, the Board sent a letter to the Mayor and Council requesting that \$10,000 be posted as a budget line item for Arts and Cultural Grants. The Board did not receive a response to their letter, nor did anyone know if there was any money on the City's budget for Grants, but never-the-less, the Board will draft another letter to look at next month to send as a reminder to the Mayor and Council that they do not want Grants to be stricken completely from the City's budget, and look forward to the day when they can be activated again to assist Mesa's local arts organizations with their programming.

Discussion also included being more pro-active in advising the Mayor and Council regarding arts and cultural issues in the community. Mr. Brimhall also suggested that Board members consider and think about how they can educate the community regarding arts and culture in their own communities.

The Chair would also like to see the Board be more pro-active in attending arts and cultural events; however, many of the Board members expressed concern that they are not aware of when they take place. Many times at the Board meetings staff will distribute invitations to openings as well as the Board receiving them in the mail. Mr. Brimhall encouraged each Board member to mark them on the calendar when they arrive or when they hear of a date at the Board meetings, and staff agreed that they would make a point of mentioning specific dates for events that the Board should attend and have a presence.

Nancy Wolter stated that the Arizona Commission for the Arts' budget has been cut dramatically, and any advocating the Board can do with our East Valley Legislatures on behalf of arts and culture is vital and greatly appreciated.

Vice DiBella commented that as a new Board member, he is not educated on the arts issues and would like to know the facts regarding areas where the Board can advocate.

One suggestion on how to keep informed was the use of social network opportunities, i.e., FaceBook, etc. and sign up to receive reminders and information of upcoming events; some organizations you can sign up for are Mesa Arts Center, Arizona Commission on the Arts, Arizona Citizens Action for the Arts, etc. Rob Schultz reported that on the Mesa Arts Center Website there is a list of 25-30 links to other key arts and cultural organizations where you can acquire a volume of information from their sites as to their programming and events. Arizona Citizen Action for the Arts particularly has a lot of information regarding advocacy for the arts Valley-wide.

In that vein, at next month's Board meeting (March 10), items for discussion will include:

- Develop strategies for the four bullet points from the Duties of the Board stated above
- Consider a drafted letter to send to the Mayor and Council regarding arts and cultural grants (Chair, Doug Brimhall will draft a letter to discuss)
- Request that staff prepare updated talking points on their specific areas for the Board to use when advocating for arts and culture
- Discuss the possibility of a Board retreat – is it wanted – prior to a Board meeting – on another day

Mr. Brimhall referred to the list in the Board packet of Mesa Arts Center's founding Affiliates. He would like to see the Board have a presence at their events as well. Mesa Arts Center has a link on their Website (mesaartscenter.com) to the active Affiliates, where you will find their programming for the season listed.

Amanda Buscas added that the Board could use a model that the Tucson Arts Council recently used, which is to invite arts organizations to a Council meeting, and during the open mike period, the organization can use their three minutes to present and/or perform to make Council aware of their organization and their presence in the community. Our Board could begin by inviting the founding Affiliates one-by-one, and when they have had their opportunity, reach out to other arts organizations in the community.

It was asked if there is a relationship between Mesa Public Schools and the arts. Randy Vogel replied that there are multiple relationships through education outreach programs, as well as offerings in the theaters, such as the annual Storytelling Festival, concerts that involve the high school bands, etc.

It was mentioned by Douglas Brimhall, Chair, that his daughter's class took a field trip to the Science Museum. He asked why we don't offer tours at the Mesa Museums. Kari Kent stated that the Mesa Museums offer tours throughout the year. Dr. Tom Wilson, AzMNH, stated that his Museum sees 40,000 school children visit each year; however, marketing the tours would more than likely provide even more visitors, but there are simply no funds to do that.

Rebecca Nolan asked if there is any connection with early childhood education programming connecting to the arts in Mesa. Rob Schultz said that there is some. Stageworks takes their show to some schools depending on the age appropriateness of the show. Stageworks also offers school shows at Mesa Arts Center for their plays and some include a workshop following. Also, half of the Arizona Museum for Youth is dedicated to that age group and includes an education component.

Nancy Wolter reported that as of today, Wednesday, February 10, staff learned that Mesa Arts Center will have a blog called Mesa Arts Center Word Press. Board members are encouraged to offer information on the blog regarding a performance they have seen, an exhibit opening that they attended, and event, an issue they want people to be aware of, etc. Information will be going out soon regarding the blog.

In closing, Mr. Brimhall stated that, as the new Chair, he would like to see the Board have a presence in the community at events, in educating the public, advocating for arts and culture, supporting the local arts organizations, and attending Council Sessions when arts and culture issues go before Council.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth – Rob Schultz reported for Sunnee Spencer Who was Ill

- Renovation is going well and currently on schedule; hope to have an opening event on May 8.
- "Play Ball" is an opportunity for the Museum to draw a new audience. A lot of effort is going into the promotion of the exhibition in every manner, way, shape, and form, especially at Hohokam Stadium to bring people downtown before and after a game.
- VIP reception for the opening is February 25. General public opening and member's reception will take place on February 26 and will run through November 7.
- Staff is focusing their efforts on the opening.
- Membership at the Museum is up to 800 families.
- "We Love Our Members" annual event will take place this coming Friday, February 12, along with a store sale to help prepare for the new Gallery Shop opening in conjunction with "Play Ball."

IMPORTANT DATE TO REMEMBER:

- May 8, tentative grand opening of AMY's renovations project

Arizona Museum of Natural History – Tom Wilson

- The Mesa Grande project is proceeding. The trail is in, and the next steps will be to design a small gathering space (bathrooms and information), 10 interruptive steps along the trail, shade structures, and erosion controls. The City of Mesa has owned the Temple Mound site since the '80s, one of three such surviving structures of similar importance in Arizona. Unveiling of the trail will take place at the annual open house on March 27.
- One of the funding sources for Mesa Grande is a \$100,000 grant from the Heritage Fund. Some of those funds, along with matching funds, were used to develop the trail and will be used for the next steps. The Museum received word today, Wednesday, February 10, that once again, the Heritage Fund may be terminated. The Museum will continue moving forward until further word.
- The Museum performed the archeology for the City's Mesa Cemetery site and found no expansive archeology sites on the grounds.
- The Museum's new exhibition, "Light, Color, Action," opened on January 22 and is receiving good feedback from the kids that are participating in the interactive science activities connected with the exhibit.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

- Opening of "Arizona Adventure" at the Arizona Museum of Natural History on March 6, 6:30 – 10:30. There will be live entertainment, dancing, food, drink, etc.
- Mesa Grande opening on March 27. Invitations will be going soon.

Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz

- Registration for adult classes is going strong – youth classes continue to lag.
- Held the usher volunteer recognition event last Monday, February 8, at Broadway Palm Dinner Theater. There were approximately 225-230 in attendance. Terry Goddard was the special guest speaker as well as Mayor Smith who addressed the value of volunteers and the impact that has on Mesa Arts Center (MAC). The top notch event was organized by Kim Forbes, Event Services Supervisor, and her staff.
- Courtney Tjaden, former Volunteer Coordinator at MAC, left for a similar position at the Musical Instrument Museum. Recruitment for the position goes through Thursday, February 11. To-date, there are over 200 applications. HR will go through the applications and send the qualified applicants to Rob Schultz to set interviews. Hope to have someone in place by April 1; the City agrees the position is an important one to fill, even with the budget crunch.
- Mesa Contemporary Arts (MCA) is opening a new exhibition, "STARE" by Chris Rush, this Friday, February 12. The opening reception for the exhibit will not take place until April 9.
- Stageworks second play of the season, "Captain Louie," runs through this weekend. A delightful musical dealing with friendships.
- Cory Simms, Stageworks Manager, resigned as of January 29. The position will not be filled at this time.
- Stageworks' third play of the season has been cancelled due to budget restraints.

Mesa Arts Center/Theaters and Operations – Randy Vogel

- Mesa Arts Center (MAC) has been named, from the book of lists, as the number two (relating to attendance) performing arts center in the Valley for 2009.
- In the process of putting out an RFP for food and beverage for Mesa Arts Center and 51-55 E. Main. The plan is to utilize 51-55 E. Main for a catering kitchen for special events at MAC and help to upgrade MAC's concession capabilities. The dream is to eventually open a restaurant and café at 51-55 E. Main.
- Itzhak Perlman sold out; Hal Holbrook sold out; and Riverdance sold out all three performances. The trend has been that people are purchasing tickets for shows they are familiar with – others remain challenging to sell.
- Continue to book for next season as well as Kim Forbes booking rentals; it will be a busy season.
- Confirmed that Lang Lang will be here as well as Joshua Bell; the Polish Symphony Orchestra; and Navah Perlman, a pianist and Itzhak Perlman's daughter, and Zuill Bailey, a phenomenal cellist.

Mesa Arts Center/Development – Nancy Wolter

- The Foundation's annual gala, Art On The Move, raised approximately \$92,000 with a net of approximately \$45,000.
- The number one auction item was tickets to a Lang Lang dinner backstage and a chance to meet the artist.
- The Foundation is having another fundraiser on March 24 featuring high school bands. Tickets are \$8 and kids under 12 are free; proceeds go the Foundation.
- Nancy encouraged Board members to become a member of Mesa Arts Center Foundation for first crack at tickets and events.

Acting Director's Report – Kari Kent

Interviews for the new Director of the Arts and Cultural Department and Executive Director of the Mesa Arts Center will take place on Tuesday, February 16. There are six outstanding candidates from around the country that include five external candidates and one internal candidate. The candidates will have a tour of MAC, interview with a panel; interview with Deputy City Manager Kari Kent, and interview with senior staff. From these candidates, there will be two or three finalists who will be brought back to meet with the Mayor, City Manager, and have a meet and greet with Department staff and Board members. The process will take a few months.

Because the Board discussed a possible retreat, Ms. Kent suggested that they may want to wait until the new Director comes on board before planning a retreat.

Ms. Kent thanked Doug Brimhall, Chair, for his participation in the process of hiring a new Arts and Cultural Director. The consultant met with representatives from different staffs and Boards to develop a profile in looking for the new Director.

Shea Joachim, Economic Development, will report to the Board next month on what is being planned for downtown Mesa; Light Rail Committee meetings; and the Central Main Street Planning Committee.

Report on Conferences and/or Meetings/Performances Attended: Board Members – Information Only

Douglas Brimhall, Chair, reported he attended the last Light Rail Meeting and found it very interesting. The discussion included where the main station would be in downtown Mesa. Mr. Brimhall stated that he thought the Board should have had

a presence on the Committee. His concern was whether there would be a Public Art element at the downtown station. Kari Kent added that Rob Schultz is the Mesa Arts Center representative on the Central Main Street Planning Committee and will have a voice on behalf of the arts in downtown Mesa. Mr. Schultz commented that he met with MB Finnerty, who coordinates the Public Art Projects at each Light Rail station. She informed Rob of the process for selecting an artist to add a Public Art component at each station. The process includes appointing a selection committee to choose the artist, and a committee to work with the artist. This is an opportunity for a Board member if they are interested in being on a committee. Ms. Finnerty is also willing to present the Board with updates as the process moves forward for the downtown Mesa station.

Amanda Buscas reported on the recent Arts Congress at the capital. She felt it was a successful day with a new format this year. Arizona Citizens for the Arts would welcome any feedback attendees have. Doug Brimhall, Chair, encouraged Board members to communicate with their legislatures in support of the arts in the Valley.

Peter Cook reported he and his wife were able to sit on the stage at the Guy Fieri performance at Mesa Arts Center in January. He asked Randy Vogel if the show was a sellout. Mr. Vogel said the show did very well and Mesa Arts Center is looking at doing more of that type of entertainment.

Kit Filbey asked whether Mesa Arts Center is able to have voter registrations available in the Registration Lobby. She feels it is important to get people involved in the arts to vote in order to pass the 2010 tax initiative. Dr. Wilson reported that the initiative has been shelved until 2012. With the state budget crisis, the Metro Phoenix Partnership for Arts and Culture (MPAC) has decided the timing just isn't right and will work at gaining support during the interim and re-introduce the initiative in 2012. Rob Schultz added that it was okay to place voter registration forms in the Registration Lobby of Mesa Arts Center.

Douglas Brimhall, Chair, distributed some of the information he received at the Arts Congress. Included were the 2010 Arizona Arts Congress Advocate Talking points and "Arts Education Advocacy Toolkit. The documents were not discussed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kari Kent, Acting Arts and Cultural Director
Arts and Cultural Department